

VZCZCXRO8711
PP RUEHDE RUEHDH RUEHDIR
DE RUEHDO #0419/01 1761057
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 251057Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9182
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 0753

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DOHA 000419

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE PLEASE PASS TO USTR

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EFIN](#) [EINV](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: QATAR FORMALIZES GOVERNMENT REORGANIZATION

REF: (A) 2008 DOHA 475
(B) DOHA 375

(SBU) KEY POINTS

-- The Heir Apparent, Shaykh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, issued decrees June 23 formally organizing the Cabinet and its Secretariat, and finalizing new organizational structures for ministries. These decrees are the next major step in an ongoing government reorganization initiated by a July 2008 Cabinet shuffle (Ref A).

-- No ministerial posts changed hands, though several ministries gained new responsibilities, notably the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Environment, and Economy and Finance.

(SBU) COMMENTS

-- The most significant changes for U.S. interests include grouping the MFA's formal authority for human rights and development issues under Minister of State Khalid Al-Attiyah, the transfer of Customs to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the formation of new Environment Ministry departments for Biotechnology and Protection from Radiation and Chemical Materials.

End Key Points and Comments.

11. (U) The Foreign Ministry continues to have three leaders of ministerial rank. Prime Minister Hamad Bin Jassim Al Thani retains the portfolio of Foreign Minister with overall authority and responsibility for Qatar's most important foreign policy issues. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ahmed al-Mahmoud retains responsibility for the Ministry's regional departments.

12. (U) The decree expanded the responsibilities of Khalid Al-Attiyah, the Minister of State for International Cooperation. He will now control four departments: the Department of Conferences and International Organizations, the Department of International Development, the Department of International Technical Cooperation, and the Department of Human Rights.

-- These new responsibilities solidify Khalid Al-Attiyah's position as a key figure in Qatar's foreign policy. By acquiring the human rights (including TIP issues) and development portfolios, he gains control of two areas that figure prominently in Qatar's interactions with foreign governments and international bodies.

-- The establishment of a Department for International Development formalizes responsibilities for creating development policy and assistance programs under the MFA. The department will also have the lead on forming partnerships with other governments, NGOs, and international and regional organizations.

-- The Department of International Technical Cooperation is intended to liaise with international organizations in order to coordinate delivery of technical assistance to Qatari government agencies.

¶3. (U) The Ministry of Business and Trade, headed in an acting capacity by Minister of State for International Cooperation Khalid Al-Attiyah, remains largely the same, at least on issues important to the USG (Ref B).

-- The Ministry retains primary responsibility for negotiation and implementation of bilateral trade agreements. It also has lead on WTO issues.

-- The Ministry is also charged with developing efforts to diversify Qatar's economy, both in terms of boosting non-hydrocarbon sectors and broadening the geographic distribution of Qatar's exports.

¶4. (U) The Ministry of Economy and Finance, headed by Yousuf Hussain Kamal, will now have three major divisions: economic affairs, financial affairs, and customs.

-- The Central Tenders Committee will still be under the Minister's purview, while budget and economic policy matters will remain the Ministry's primary responsibilities.

-- The addition of Customs is significant in that it gives the Minister direct control over these matters at Qatar's land crossing with Saudi Arabia, the international airport, and its three major seaports of Ras Laffan, Doha Port, and Mesaieed. Qatar Petroleum maintains overall control of the seaports at Ras Laffan and Mesaieed, but Customs still maintains responsibility for inspecting

DOHA 00000419 002 OF 002

and clearing cargo at all facilities.

-- As part of its Customs duties, the Ministry will be responsible for applying the rules and regulations issued by international organizations to which Qatar is a member-state.

¶5. (U) The decrees also formalize greatly expanded responsibilities for the Ministry of Environment.

-- The Minister will have a new International Cooperation department reporting directly to him.

-- An Assistant Undersecretary will be in charge of measurements and specifications, standards, laboratories, and quality issues. (Note: The formerly independent Organization of Standards and Meteorology was folded into this section.)

-- Another Assistant Undersecretary will have oversight of agricultural, animal, and fish matters. Moreover, this section includes a "Green Qatar" department intended to expand green areas in Qatar, encourage agriculture, and consult on design of parks and irrigation systems in the country.

-- Significantly, a new Biotechnology Department was also established. The decree lists its responsibilities as - inter alia - conducting applied and specialized research, providing scientific views on biotechnology issues, conducting studies on environmental safety, using biotechnology to increase crop yields, and using DNA techniques for various plant and animal classifications.

-- A third Assistant Undersecretary will oversee environmental evaluation and inspection, water issues, and conservation.

-- Notably, the decree also establishes a new department for Protection from Radiation and Chemical Materials.

¶6. (SBU) The decree gave the Ministry of Culture responsibility for the General Youth Authority (GYA) which includes the Doha Youth Center, a key partner for Embassy Public Affairs and Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) programming.

-- For the past 14 years the GYA was an independent entity. Prior to

the recent decree, GYA head Khalid Yousef Al Mulla had direct contact with the Amiri Diwan with regard to Youth Affairs, and had the complete authority to organize summer programs and youth enrichment activities with the local sports clubs. He prided himself on keeping kids off streets, and away from drugs and road rage incidents (common among Qatari youth).

-- The absorption of GYA under the Ministry of Culture could complicate these youth programs as it will make them dependent on the ministry's funding and approval. Last year, GYA partially funded trips by 54 Qatari exchange students to the U.S. This year, a similar program could not be organized owing to lack of funding.

17. (U) The Embassy's preliminary review of the detailed decrees does not indicate any major changes (at least as far as U.S. interests are concerned) to the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Awqaf (Islamic Endowments), or Ministry of Labor.

18. (SBU) Post is working in coordination with the National Virtual Translation Center to carry out a detailed translation of the decrees, which will eventually be posted to Intelink.

LEBARON